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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TWENTY-SEVEN ALLEGED MEMBERS OF PHILADELPHIA AREA COCAINE TRAFFICKING RINGS CHARGED IN TWO SEPARATE INDICTMENTS

PHILADELPHIA – Patrick L. Meehan, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and Jeffrey A. Lampinski, Special-Agent-in-Charge of the Philadelphia Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), today announced the unsealing of indictments¹ against two major cocaine trafficking rings that were active in the Philadelphia area at various times between 1999 and 2003. The indictments charge a total of 27 defendants with federal crimes ranging from narcotics trafficking and illegal possession of firearms, to money laundering and tax evasion.

“The indictments and arrests announced today are the result of our continuing efforts to go after drug organizations that make life so difficult for the people who live and work in neighborhoods where dealers set up shop,” said Meehan. “The defendants, motivated by greed, sold hundreds of kilograms of cocaine in the Philadelphia area and attempted to cover their tracks by laundering the proceeds. If we are going to improve the quality of life for people in our communities, drug dealers need to know that we are committed to dismantling their organizations, putting the offenders behind bars, and taking whatever assets they’ve accumulated.”

The Thomas-Savage Organization

The thirteen-count indictment in **United States v. Gerald Thomas et al.**, Criminal No. 04-269, supersedes the indictment returned last week against Kaboni Savage, and charges nineteen defendants as part of a cocaine trafficking organization which sold hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and crack in the Philadelphia area over the last approximately three-and-a-half years. The superseding indictment also charges a twentieth defendant and some of the drug defendants charged in Count One with money laundering.

Specifically, Count One charges Gerald Thomas, Kaboni Savage, Paul Daniels, Robert Wilks, Dawud Bey, Steven Northington, Oscar Francis, Myron Wilson, Joseph Newman, Dammon Everett, James Walker, Gregory Mills, Daren Blackwell, Tyrone Beal, Derek Russell,

¹An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Demetrius Williams, Malik Jones, Ronald Jones, and Richard Bond with conspiracy to manufacture and distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine and more than 50 grams of cocaine base. Count Two charges Melvin Stein, a licensed real estate agent, along with Thomas, Wilks, and Daniels, with conspiracy to launder monetary instruments. Savage, Wilks, Daniels, and Northington are charged with additional money laundering violations in Counts Three through Ten. The indictment also charges Savage and Northington with federal firearms offenses in Counts Eleven through Thirteen. The government will be seeking to forfeit the criminal proceeds of the drug trafficking organization, as well as numerous properties, automobiles, and other assets pursuant to the forfeiture provisions of federal law.

According to the indictment, Thomas and Savage managed and supervised the Thomas-Savage Organization, which distributed hundreds of kilograms of cocaine obtained from multiple suppliers in Pennsylvania, New York, and Florida. The organization dealt mostly in kilogram quantities of cocaine, although they also occasionally sold crack. The organization enhanced its profits by cutting and re-compressing the cocaine they obtained, before selling the re-compressed cocaine to its customers and mid-level distributors.

If convicted, each of the nineteen defendants charged in Count One faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, and a mandatory minimum sentence of at least ten years in prison, and several million dollars in fines. If convicted of the money laundering conspiracy, defendant Melvin Stein faces a maximum penalty of twenty years in prison and a \$500,000 fine.

United States Attorney Meehan and Special-Agent-in-Charge Lampinski commended and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided to the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, the Philadelphia Police Department – Narcotics and Major Crimes Divisions, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Mark J. Ehlers of the Organized Crime Division of the United States Attorney's Office, and to Special Assistant United States Attorney Gregory C.J. Lisa of the U.S. Department of Justice, Organized Crime and Racketeering Section.

The Byron Darby Conspiracy

In a related investigation, a separate ten-count indictment was unsealed in the case of **United States v. Byron Darby et al.**, Criminal No. 04-246, in which seven defendants are charged with conspiracy to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine and related offenses. Specifically, Count One charges Byron Darby, Wendell Mason, Carlos Coleman, Dana Williams, Keith Wroda, Julius Thigpen, and Debra McDuffie with conspiracy to distribute in excess of five kilograms of cocaine. Counts Two, Three, and Four charge Darby, Mason, and Coleman with distributing a total of 27 kilograms of cocaine. Wroda is also charged in Count Four with

distribution of fifteen kilograms of cocaine, and Williams is charged in Count Five with possession with intent to distribute more than five grams of cocaine base ("crack"). The Indictment also charges Williams with money laundering in Count Six, and charges Mason with federal tax violations in Counts Seven through Ten.

According to the indictment, on three occasions from December 2000 through June 2001, Mason and others traveled to Chicago, Illinois, where they obtained from Darby a total of 27 kilograms of cocaine. Mason then returned to Philadelphia where the cocaine was sold. The indictment also alleges that Wroda installed a secret compartment in Mason's car to smuggle the cocaine to Philadelphia.

If convicted, each of the defendants faces a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, and a mandatory minimum sentence of at least ten years in prison, and several million dollars in fines.

United States Attorney Meehan and Special-Agent-in-Charge Lampinski commended and expressed appreciation for the assistance provided to the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which jointly investigated this case with the FBI. Other agencies participating in the investigation included the Internal Revenue Service, the Chicago Division of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office, the Philadelphia Police Department, and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office.

Prosecution of this case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Ronald G. Cole of the Organized Crime Division of the United States Attorney's Office.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

United States v. Gerald Thomas et al., Criminal No. 04-269:

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE OF BIRTH
Gerald Thomas	9 Bluegrass Road Clementon, NJ 08021	5/22/49
Kaboni Savage	3643 North Darien Street Philadelphia, PA 19140	1/1/75
Paul Daniels	1805 East Tulpehocken St. Philadelphia, PA 19138	11/28/70
Robert Wilks	1546 East Upsal Street Philadelphia, PA 19150	6/29/69

Dawud Bey	7509 Tulpehocken Street Philadelphia, PA 19138	8/26/68
Steven Northington	3025 North 8 th Street Philadelphia, PA 19133	1/25/72
Oscar Francis	4240 Lawndale Street Philadelphia, PA 19124	10/15/76
Myron Wilson	1627 West Lehigh Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19132	7/8/65
Melvin Stein	1304 Barton Drive Fort Washington, PA 19034	6/4/45
Joseph Newman	5529 Sprague Street Philadelphia, PA 19138	4/28/47
Dammon Everett	2622 Cheltenham Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19124	9/9/74
James Walker	3719 Wallace Street Philadelphia, PA 19104	3/24/45
Gregory Mills	2531 South Claymont Street Philadelphia, PA 19153	7/17/62
Daren Blackwell	707 North Warnock Place Philadelphia, PA 19123	3/23/79
Tyrone Beal	6335 North 13 th Street Philadelphia, PA 19141	12/29/78
Derek Russell	649 North 12 th Street Philadelphia, PA 19123	9/11/69
Demetrius Williams	2116 Larue Street Philadelphia, PA 19124	6/4/75
Malik Jones	8525 Forrest Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19150	12/7/77
Ronald Jones	2512 North 28 th Street Philadelphia, PA 19132	1/20/72
Richard Bond	1920 West Venango Street Philadelphia, PA 19140	1/7/65

United States v. Byron Darby et al., Criminal No. 04-246:

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE OF BIRTH
Byron Darby	7 Constitution Road Sewell, NJ	6/4/60
Wendell Mason	57 Bonnie Gellman Court Apt. C-57 Philadelphia, PA	4/3/51
Carlos Coleman	2228 Bosworth Avenue Lindenwold, NJ	12/20/69
Dana Williams	2127 North Natrona Philadelphia, PA	11/3/73
Keith Wroda	14751 Kenton Avenue Apt. 3B Midlothian, IL	12/21/68
Julius Thigpen	1543 S. Etting Street Philadelphia, PA	1/18/63
Debra McDuffie	6138 Grays Avenue Philadelphia, PA	2/12/63

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